

Dear Interested Party:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently revised the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for particulate matter (PM). The NAAQS are nation-wide air quality standards established to protect the public from unhealthy levels of air pollution. EPA's revised PM NAAQS took effect on December 18, 2006.

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) evaluated air quality monitoring data across the state and determined that Missoula, Lincoln, and Ravalli Counties fail to meet the PM NAAQS. The Governor is required to notify EPA of all counties violating the PM NAAQS by December 18, 2007. EPA is then required to take final action on the Governor's recommended "nonattainment area" list by December 18, 2008 and officially confirm their status as nonattainment areas. As a consequence of EPA designation of nonattainment, Congress directs states to submit a federally enforceable air pollution control plan to EPA for approval.

In Ravalli County, new air quality regulations on motor vehicles, wood stoves, open burning, and industrial operations must be developed and will likely affect many county residents. Proactively, DEQ would like to work with local governments, the potentially regulated community, and other interested parties to identify and develop the new regulations to control the sources of particle matter air pollution in Ravalli County. DEQ representatives will hold the initial meeting with interested parties in the Ravalli County Commission meeting room on Wednesday, December 12, 2007 from 1 to 3 PM.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Bob Habeck (bhabeck@mt.gov or 444-7305). Please feel free to copy and distribute this notice to any parties you believe might be interested in this matter. Thank you for your efforts in protecting Ravalli County's clean air resource.

Robert K. Jeffrey
Air Quality Specialist
Air Resources Management Bureau
MT Dept. of Environmental Quality
(406) 444-5280; fax 444-1499
Email: rjeffrey@mt.gov

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Ravalli County Commissioners

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